

Message Text

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70

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 MCT-01

IO-13 /073 W

----- 121309

R 211543Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9678

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 6380

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SY

SUBJECT: BOMB EXPLOSIONS IN DAMASCUS AND ALEPPO

1. SEVERAL RELIABLE SOURCES HAVE REPORTED OCCURRENCE OF THREE BOMB EXPLOSIONS IN DAMASCUS EARLY MORNING SEPT. 20. FIRST EXPLOSIONS TOOK PLACE ALONG WALL OF G-2 TRAINING CAMP LOCATED IN CHRISTIAN QUARTER OF CITY AT APPROXIMATELY 0430L. SOURCE WHO LIVES NEARBY HEARD EXPLOSION AND SHORTLY THEREAFTER WITNESSED HOLE BOMB MADE IN WALL. GUARD TOLD SOURCE THAT HE HAD FIRED AT ESCAPING AUTO FROM WHICH BOMB TOSSED. SECOND EXPLOSION TOOK PLACE AT BAATH PARTY BRANCH OFFICE IN CHRISTIAN QUARTER AT ABOUT 0500L; EXTENSIVE DAMAGE WAS CAUSED TO PREMISES. TWO RELIABLE SOURCES TOLD US THEY PERSONALLY SAW DAMAGE DONE TO BUILDING. THIRD EXPLOSION ALSO OCCURRED EARLY IN MORNING AND IN BAATH PARTY OFFICE, BUT IN DAMASCUS SUBURB OF DUMMAR. NO INJURIES HAVE YET BEEN REPORTED AS RESULT OF ANY OF THREE EXPLOSIONS, AND GIVEN TIME OF DAY FOR ALL THREE WE WOULD EXPECT POSSIBLE INJURIES TO BE LIMITED TO GUARDS OR CUSTODIANS

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RATHER THAN OFFICE PERSONNEL.

2. EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE FROM ALEPPO REPORTED THAT FIVE EXPLOSIONS OCCURRED THERE LAST WEEK, EACH IN DIFFERENT PART OF CITY. ONE, PLACED IN GARBAGE BARREL, EXPLODED WHEN TWO WORKERS PICKED IT UP, INJURING BOTH SERIOUSLY. ANOTHER HAD BEEN PLACED IN SMALL TAPE RECORDER WHICH WAS LEFT WITH SHOPKEEPER BY AN UNIDENTIFIED PURCHASER WHO COULD NOT PAY HIS ENTIRE BILL. IT EXPLODED DURING THE NIGHT CAUSING CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO THE STORE.

3. COMMENT: SOME SYRIANS HAVE ALREADY NOTED THAT ARRESTS OF PERPETRATORS OF PREVIOUS BOMBINGS IN JULY/AUGUST HAVE NOT STEMMED CONTINUED OCCURRENCE OF BOMBINGS. IN THESE LATEST EXAMPLES, CARE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO MINIMIZE THREAT TO INNOCENT PERSONNEL AND MAXIMIZE SYMBOLIC IMPACT OF DEFIANCE OF REGIME'S AUTHORITY BY AIMING AT G-2 AND BAATH PARTY BUILDINGS.
MURPHY

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NNN

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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